

Still another broad element in crisis bargaining (or any bargaining) is that of *persuasion*. Persuasion is akin to coercion in that its aim is to influence the adversary to concede, to accept one's own demands. Unlike coercion, however, it does not involve threatening harm to the other party if he does not concede. One form of persuasion is to attempt to change the adversary's estimate of the empirical consequence of possible outcomes, or the value he places on these consequences. For example, the persuader tries to show the other party that backing down would not be as costly as he might think, that a war would have terrible consequences, that his (the persuader's) military capabilities are superior, etc. Persuasion also includes trying to change the adversary's estimates of how oneself predicts the nature of outcomes and values them. In short, persuasion attempts to influence the adversary's value structure and his perception of one's own values—for given outcomes. Both coercive and accommodative moves (threats and concessions) present the adversary with a *choice* between a pair of outcomes, one of which is certain, the other uncertain. That is, a coercive threat gives him a choice between accepting the demand or taking the risk that the threat will be carried out. A concession gives him a choice between accepting the offer or holding out in the hope of getting more. Persuasion helps him make these choices to one's own advantage, by changing his valuation of the outcomes and his estimate of one's own valuations, as well as his prediction of the likelihood of uncertain outcomes.

PERSUASION, COERCION, AND THE CRITICAL RISK MODEL

Bargaining tactics, especially persuasion and coercion, can usefully be related to Ellsberg's critical risk model.¹¹ Its usefulness derives from its fairly realistic assumption that (1) each party knows its own payoffs for different outcomes but does not know those of the other party, and (2) each party's payoffs are subject to change during the bargaining process. As will be recalled, (see Fig. 3-1), a party's "critical risk" is derived entirely from its own values and expresses the degree of war risk that the party can "stand." Theoretically, the party compares his own critical risk with his perception of the probability (credibility) that the other will stand firm or attack if the party does not concede. The estimate of the opponent's threat credibility is derived in part from estimates of the opponent's payoffs, but since these estimates are uncertain, the opponent's past and present behavior may influence credibility estimates directly. If the credibility of the other's threat is higher than the party's critical risk, the party must yield; if it

¹¹ Ellsberg, "The Theory and Practice of Blackmail."

is lower, he will stand firm. Thus, both bargainers are interested in reducing the adversary's critical risk and increasing their own threat credibility. Such manipulation may be done by a variety of bargaining tactics, most of which fall into the "persuasive" category. They come in three subclasses: (1) those that attempt to change one's own payoffs or the opponent's estimates of them for possible outcomes, (2) those which tend to increase the credibility of one's firmness but without changing payoffs, and (3) those that attempt to change the opponent's payoffs. The first two types are aimed at increasing one's own credibility of firmness, the third at reducing the adversary's critical risk. (There is some overlap, i.e., some tactics may work both ways.)

The following list shows the tactics that appeared most frequently in our cases. Each is accompanied by a brief statement of the crises where it appeared most prominently. A few are tactics we expected to find when we began our research, but found no instances.¹²

I. Increase credibility of own firmness by changing one's apparent payoffs

Here the attempt is to change the adversary's estimate of one's own payoffs—e.g., to minimize the adversary's estimate of one's own net costs of war, to maximize one's apparent valuation of winning, and to maximize one's apparent cost of yielding. Some of these tactics may actually change one's payoffs; others merely change the opponent's perceptions of them. For bargaining effect it is, of course, the adversary's perceptions that count.

A. Reduce one's apparent net cost of war

1. Increase capabilities (United States and Soviet Union, Berlin, 1961)
2. Increase readiness of capabilities (U.S., 1962; 1973)
3. Various verbal statements
 - a. "We don't fear war" (Hitler, 1938)
 - b. "We will win" (no instances)
 - c. "Your ally will not support you" (Germany to France re England, 1914; England to Germany re Italy, 1914)
 - d. "Our ally will support us" (Austria to Russia, 1914)
 - e. "We believe the war will be limited" (no instance)

B. Increase one's apparent valuation of the stakes (increase costs of backing down, increase the apparent value of winning)

1. Make threats that engage prestige, honor, and future bargaining reputation (instances in all cases studied)

¹² Many of the tactics in the list are suggested in the writings of Thomas Schelling, esp. *The Strategy of Conflict*. Some others are discussed by Robert Jervis, in *The Logic of Images*. Some simply appeared in our cases, not having been mentioned in the theoretical literature.

2. Couple the present issue with other issues; make it appear as an aspect of a larger confrontation (United States 1958—coupling Quemoy to Formosa)
 - a. Cite need to preserve reputation for resolve in general, or reputation for loyalty to allies (United States, Berlin, 1948; United States and Soviet Union, Berlin, 1961; United States, Quemoy, 1958)
3. Cite the legitimacy or fairness of one's position
 - a. Inviolability of the status quo (United States, Cuba, 1962)
 - b. The right of consultation (Germany, Morocco, 1905)
 - c. The right of compensation (Germany, Morocco, 1911)
4. Tie one's position to moral principles (United States, Berlin, 1948, 1958, 1961; Hitler, 1938—persecution of Sudeten Germans, their right of national self-determination)
5. Invoke legal rights (France and England, Fashoda, 1898; United States and Soviet Union, Iran, 1946; United States and Soviet Union, Berlin, 1948, 1958, 1961)
6. Invoke alliance obligations (moral principle as well as political value of alliance preservation and cohesion) (England to Germany, 1905; Germany to Entente powers, and France and England to Central Powers, 1914; Soviet Union and United States, Berlin, 1958–1962)
7. Invoke “national honor” (England, 1911; Germany, 1914; Soviet Union, 1946)
8. Cite danger of internal revolution if oneself capitulates (Austria to Russia, 1914)
9. Invoke historical tradition (United States, Cuba, 1962—Monroe Doctrine)

II. *Increase apparent probability of firmness without changing payoffs.*

Although some of the tactics in this category may carry indirect implications about one's payoffs, their primary intent or effect is to modify the opponent's direct perceptions of the probabilities of one's choice. Most are coercive rather than persuasive.

1. Irrevocable commitment (physically or administratively eliminate the alternative of compliance, or make compliance physically or administratively difficult; “relinquish the initiative”) (Berlin blockade, 1948; Berlin Wall, 1961; German Schlieffen Plan, 1914).
2. Claim lack of control over subordinates or inability to resist their pressure (Aehrenthal, 1909; Czar, 1914; Hitler, 1938).
3. Devolve decision-making authority to lower levels in the command hierarchy to persons whose incentive structure is more

favorable to firmness than that of the governmental leadership (or appear to do so) (to General Clay, Marshall Konev, Berlin, 1961; General Kitchener, 1898; U.S. Seventh Fleet Commanders, Quemoy, 1958).

4. Devolve decision-making authority to a proxy state or ally whose incentive structure more obviously favors firmness than one's own (or threaten to do so) (Germany to Austria, 1914; Soviet Union to E. Germany, 1958, 1961).
5. Claim that one's constituency will not allow compliance or compromise (the constituency may be the cabinet, Congress, public opinion, allies, etc.) (England to Germany, 1905, 1914; Germany to France, 1911).
6. Parliamentary votes and resolutions supporting one's position (U.S. Formosa Resolution of 1955).
7. Pretend irrationality (Hitler, 1938).
8. Express confidence in the adversary's rationality and good sense (“since you are reasonable you are surely not going to fight over this minor issue”) (Khrushchev, 1958, 1961, 1962).
9. Express disbelief in the opponent's commitment, or skepticism about his resolve (“my resolve is high because I think yours is low”) (Soviet Union, Berlin, 1958–1961).
10. Emphasize uncertainties in the situation, or the unpredictability of one's own behavior, e.g., “keep them guessing” (England, 1938; United States, 1941; United States, Quemoy, 1958).
11. Show of force; minor use of force. (England, 1898; Germany, 1911; United States, 1946; United States, 1948; Britain, France, Israel, 1956; United States, Lebanon and Quemoy, 1958; United States and Soviet Union, Berlin, 1961–1962; United States, 1962).
12. Represent oneself as a “force of nature,” totally committed and immune to persuasion (Hitler, 1938; Eisenhower, Berlin, 1958; Khrushchev, Berlin, 1961).

III. *Reduce the adversary's critical risk*

The adversary's critical risk is a function of *his* payoffs—his cost of war and his valuation of the stakes. These utilities can be manipulated, although perhaps to a lesser degree than the adversary's perception of one's own utilities.

A. *Increase the adversary's estimate of his net costs of war.*

1. Increase one's own capabilities and readiness (United States and Soviet Union, Berlin, 1961; United States and Soviet Union, Cuba, 1962; Germany, 1938)
2. Verbally exaggerate one's capabilities, claim that the balance

- of military power favors oneself (Soviet Union, Berlin, 1958–1962)
- 3. Emphasize the loyalty of one's own allies and the unreliability of the adversary's allies (Germany and France, 1914—unreliability vs. reliability of England; France to Germany, 1905—English loyalty to France)
- 4. Stress the danger of escalation (Soviet Union, Lebanon, 1958; Soviet Union, Berlin, 1958–1962)
- 5. Stress danger of revolution as consequence of war (Germany to Russia, 1914)
- 6. If we fight, state *X* will be the beneficiary (England to Germany, 1938—*X*=Soviet Union)
- B. *Devalue the stakes for the adversary* (decrease his cost of compliance, reduce his estimate of the value of winning)
 - 1. Stress limited nature of aim (Hitler, 1938—“this is my last demand”; Austria, 1914—“we will not take any Serbian territory”)
 - 2. Provide a loophole or rationale that permits the adversary to back down or de-commit himself with minimum humiliation (United States to Soviet Union, 1946—show of belief that Soviet troops' actions in Iran were not sanctioned by government; Mussolini and Chamberlain to Hitler, 1938—suggestion of conference allowed Hitler to decommit himself from attacking)
 - 3. Invoke community values that adversary would serve by backing down (United States to Soviet Union, 1962—how Khrushchev would contribute to world peace by retreating)
 - 4. Mobilize support of international community institutions for one's own position (United States, 1946; United States, 1962)
 - 5. Undermine the legitimacy of the opponent's position (Soviet Union, 1958—the status of West Berlin is “abnormal”; Hitler, 1938—Sudeten Germans should be in the Reich by right of “national self-determination”)
 - 6. Challenge the legality of the opponent's position (United States, Berlin, 1958–1962; England and France, 1898; Russia and England, 1908; Germany, 1905 and 1911; United States, 1946; United States and Soviet Union, 1948; Soviet Union, 1962)
 - 7. Minimize the element of duress or provocation in one's demands and threats (England, 1898; England, 1905, 1914; England and France, 1938; United States, 1946; Soviet Union, 1958, 1961; United States, 1962)

- a. Assert that the crisis has arisen autonomously rather than by deliberate challenge (Soviet Union, 1958–1960, 1961; Hitler, 1938)
- b. Give a non-coercive rationale for coercive moves (Germany, 1911; Soviet Union and United States, 1948; England and France, 1956)
- c. Use non-provocative diplomatic “code language” (almost all parties in all crises)
- 8. De-couple the present issue from other or future issues (“This issue is special. I will not draw any conclusions about your general resolve if you concede on this issue”) (Soviet Union, Berlin Wall, 1961)
- 9. Help the adversary undo his commitment by arguing that the situation does not meet the conditions specified in his threat or commitment (Soviet Union, Cuba, 1962—“the missiles are not offensive”)
- 10. Stress the common interests in settling the dispute and avoiding war (United States and Soviet Union, Berlin, 1958–1962; United States and Soviet Union, Cuba, 1962; England to Germany, 1914; Germany to Russia, 1914—appeal to “monarchical solidarity”)
 - a. Promise improvement in relations if demands are accepted (Germany to England, 1905, 1914, 1938; England to Germany, 1914; Soviet Union to United States, 1961; France to England, 1898)
- 11. Suggest plaudits to be gained from third parties or neutrals by giving in (Kennedy to Khrushchev, 1962)
- 12. Use proxy state to present the challenge (devalues the stakes for the adversary because it is not a test of resolve with his primary opponent) (U.S. use of Israel in Syria–Jordan crisis of 1970)

Persuasive communication attempts to magnify in the adversary's mind one's own interests at stake and minimize one's own costs of war, and to change in the opposite direction the adversary's estimate of his own values and costs. With some of the tactics just listed, there is a problem in how to change one's own apparent valuations without changing the adversary's in the same direction. For example, citing the need to preserve one's reputation for firmness may remind the opponent that he has a resolve reputation to protect, too, or more subtly, the more one emphasizes one's resolve-reputational values, the more the issue itself is transformed into a resolve contest, automatically engaging the adversary's resolve reputation. Either way, the effort is

futile, and indeed dangerous, which is perhaps why we find few invocations of need-to-preserve-resolve-image as a bargaining tactic, although it is a value in internal decision making in most crises. Pretty much the same point can be made about invocations of "national honor" or "prestige"; to engage such values for oneself automatically engages them for the opponent as well. Similarly, to suggest how the opponent can serve common interests or general community values by giving in, naturally makes him wonder why *he* is the one who has to make the sacrifice.

Persuasive tactics, therefore, are potentially effective only when they change payoffs or perceptions of them asymmetrically, as Robert Jervis has pointed out.¹³ Most of the moves and declarations listed above do have asymmetrical effects. Obviously, increasing the size or readiness of military forces reduces one's potential net war costs and increases the adversary's. Most of the verbal items point to values or empirical elements in the situation that are important only or primarily for one side. For example, to insist on the sanctity of the status quo emphasizes the values of the defending side. To stress the legitimacy of change ("the status of Berlin is abnormal") tends to expand the apparent stake of the challenger. Emphasizing the moral principle and legal rights in one's position tends to enhance one's own stake, but not automatically that of the opponent. In general, the trick in all these tactics is to point to elements that suggest that one's own interests, and hence one's own costs in backing down, are greater than the adversary's.

Similarly, the mobilization of international institutions in support of one's position adds legitimacy to it, and denies legitimacy to the adversary. It tends to increase the cost of intransigence for the opponent, for he is then placed in the position of flaunting the will of a wider community that presumably speaks for objective justice rather than the self-interest of a particular adversary. It also decreases his cost of backing down because conceding to the will of the "community" is less humiliating than conceding to the will of another state. He can present his withdrawal as obedience to an impersonal set of generally valid rules rather than capitulation to the superior power of a peer. For example, the Soviet withdrawal from Iran in 1946 was made easier by the fact that the Western powers exercised their pressure through U.N. procedures more than by direct coercion. U.N. involvement has been significant in several post-World War II crises, notably in our sample (in addition to the Iran case), Suez, 1956; Cuba, 1962; and the Middle East, 1973. The unanimous Organization of American States endorsement of the U.S. position in the Cuba case strengthened the U.S. bargaining power.

¹³ Jervis, "Bargaining and Bargaining Tactics."

The effectiveness of persuasive tactics varies widely. Generally, the verbal tactics are most likely to be effective when the adversary is already predisposed to believe what the persuader is saying. Thus Hitler was effective when he pointed out to Chamberlain that although his own interest in change in Czechoslovakia was high, he did not believe Britain had any interests there. Conversely, in 1914, officials of the French and German foreign offices failed to change the other's belief that England would or would not fight. But the British argument to Germany that Italy would defect did add something to the trepidation felt among German officials in the last days of the crisis, since they already had their doubts about Italy. If a country already perceives some legitimacy in the adversary's position, the latter's assertions of such legitimacy will have some effect in changing, to its advantage, the first country's perceptions of comparative valuations and comparative firmness. Germany's assertion of its "right" to consultation about Morocco in 1905 and its "right" to compensation in 1911 activated latent French guilt feelings, and Hitler's assertions of the injustices of the Versailles Treaty activated British ones in 1938. Perhaps the major reason why the United States agreed to negotiate about Berlin in 1958 and 1961 was that there was a good deal of suppressed agreement with Khrushchev's claim that the situation *was* abnormal.

Finally, persuasive arguments are more likely to be effective if there are empirical elements in the situation that support their plausibility. Berchtold's statement to the Russian government in 1914 that the Austrian government would be "swept away" if it modified its demands on Serbia probably was effective in convincing the Russians early that negotiations would be futile, given their knowledge of the instability of the Austrian regime. In the Cuban missile crisis of 1962, Khrushchev was fairly easily convinced of the superiority of U.S. values at stake because of certain obvious facts, such as geographical location, a large U.S. base on the island, and the fact that the missiles would have increased Soviet nuclear striking power against the United States by something like 50 percent. By contrast, a claim that a crisis is a special case, that therefore the adversary will not impair his resolve image in future crises by retreating, is likely to be ineffectual because of the difficulty in adducing empirical support for the argument.

Accommodative tactics are not included in the list given above, because the critical risk model, or formula, does not describe very well what actually occurs in a process of accommodation, in crises at least. According to the formula (p. 51), first each bargainer calculates both critical risks, then the party with the lower critical risk reduces its claim. This reduces both critical risks: the conceder's because he is now demanding less than before and logically will risk less to get that